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NSC BRIEFING

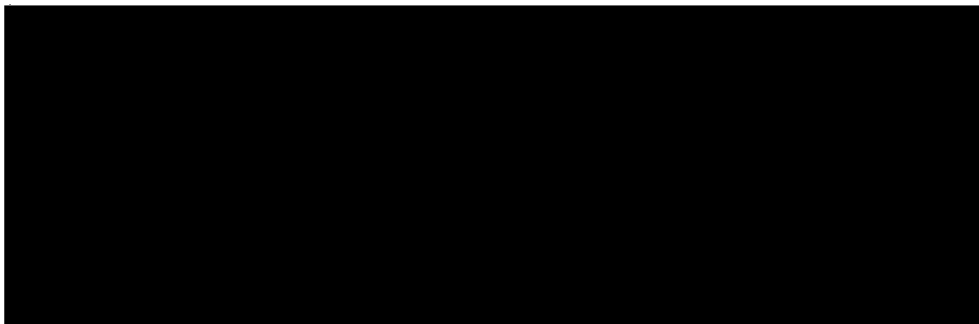
12 January 1955  
D/FE, B/CH

THE HAMMARSKJOLD MISSION

- I. Hammarskjold reported "moderately optimistic" over prospects for release of US airmen imprisoned by Chinese Communists as "spies."
  - A. Hammarskjold got definite impression Chou En-lai did not wish to close door to settlement of case.
  - B. Chou made clear that outcome might be favorable if question of release of prisoners could be divorced from "political overtones."
  - C. Chou's reported position is consistent with several Chinese Communist statements in recent months that Peiping could not be "intimidated" into releasing airmen, but that their cases might be "reviewed."
- II. Hammarskjold told Ambassador Allison and General Hull in Tokyo that Chou did not relate case of airmen to any other issue and that he and Chou did not discuss in any way such questions as China's seat in the UN.

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B. Also contrary to Peiping's propaganda, which has consistently related case to such grievances as seat in UN, US-Nationalist activities, Chinese prisoners of Korean war, Chinese students and financial assets in US.

III. Until we get clarification from Hammarskjold on this question of related issues, we cannot tell whether Peiping hopes to bargain with US on release of airmen.

- A. Many observers have believed Hammarskjold would bring back Chinese Communist opening bid for settlement on basis of US compromise on larger questions.
- B. It may be that these questions will arise in any future negotiations on airmen's case.
- C. Meanwhile, Peiping might seek to stimulate negotiations by soon freeing some US nationals not charged with espionage, such as the four fighter pilots accused only of air "violation."

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